

# Super Mario Bros. 3

***Super Mario Bros.*** 3<sup>[a]</sup> is a platform video game developed and published by Nintendo for the  Nintendo Entertainment System(NES). It was released in Japan on October 23, 1988, and in North America on February 12, 1990. It was developed by  Nintendo Entertainment Analysis and Development, led by  Shigeru Miyamoto and  Takashi Tezuka.

Players control plumbers  Mario or  Luigi, who must save  Princess Toadstool and the rulers of seven different kingdoms from the antagonist  Bowser. As in previous *Mario* games, they defeat enemies by stomping them or using  items that bestow magical powers; they also have new abilities, including flight or sliding down slopes. *Super Mario Bros. 3* introduces many elements that became *Mario* staples, such as Bowser's children the  Koopalings and a  world map to transition between  levels.

*Super Mario Bros. 3* is acclaimed by critics as one of  the greatest video games of all time.<sup>[5]</sup><sup>[6]</sup><sup>[7]</sup> It is the  third-best-selling NES game, having sold over 17 million copies worldwide. It also inspired a short-lived animated television series. Remakes were released on the  Super NES in 1993 and the  Game Boy Advance in 2003. The game has been re-released on the  Virtual Console for the  Wii,  Nintendo 3DS,  Wii U and  Nintendo Switch consoles.

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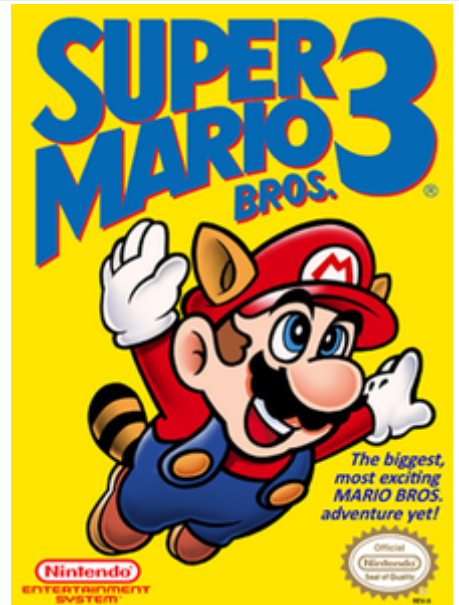
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## Gameplay

*Super Mario Bros. 3* is a  two-dimensional,  side-scrolling platform game in which the player controls either  Mario or  Luigi. The game shares similar gameplay mechanics with previous games in the series—*Super Mario Bros.*, *Super Mario Bros.: The Lost Levels*, and *Super Mario Bros. 2*, while introducing several new elements. In addition to running and jumping found in past games, the player can slide down slopes, pick up and throw special blocks, and freely climb vines. Mario can also fly and float with power-ups.<sup>[8]</sup> The game world consists of eight "kingdoms", each

### *Super Mario Bros. 3*



The cover art depicts Mario, the main protagonist, flying with the ears and tail of a Japanese raccoon dog , obtained from the new "Super Leaf" item.

Developer(s)	Nintendo R&D4
Publisher(s)	Nintendo
Director(s)	Takashi Tezuka <sup>[1]</sup>
Producer(s)	Shigeru Miyamoto
Programmer(s)	Toshihiko Nakago
Artist(s)	Takashi Tezuka Hideki Konno Hiroyuki Kimura
Composer(s)	Koji Kondo
Series	<i>Super Mario</i>
Platform(s)	Nintendo Entertainment System, PlayChoice-10, Game Boy Advance
Release	JP: October 23, 1988 <sup>[3]</sup> <div>NA: February 12, 1990<sup>[2]</sup></div> <div>PAL: August 29, 1991<sup>[4]</sup></div>

subdivided into multiple levels. The eight worlds feature distinct visual themes: for example, the second world, "Desert Land", contains sand-covered levels with pyramids, while the levels in the fourth world, "Giant Land", contain obstacles and enemies four times their normal size.<sup>[9]</sup>

Genre(s)	Platforming
Mode(s)	Single-player, multiplayer

The player navigates through the game via two game screens: an overworld map and a level playfield. The overworld map displays an overhead representation of the current kingdom and has several paths leading from the world's entrance to a castle. Paths connect to action panels, fortresses, and other map icons, and allow players to take different routes to reach the kingdom's goal. Moving the on-screen character to an action panel or fortress will allow access to that level's playfield, a linear stage populated with obstacles and enemies. The majority of the game takes place in these levels, with the player traversing the stage by running, jumping, flying, swimming, and dodging or defeating enemies.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

Completing stages allows the player to progress through the overworld map and to succeeding worlds. Each world features a final stage with a boss to defeat. The first seven worlds feature an airship controlled by one of the Koopalings, while the player battles Bowser in his castle in the eighth world as the Final boss. Other map icons include large boulders and locked doors that impede paths. Mini-games and bonus screens on the map provide the player a chance to obtain special power-ups and additional lives. Power-ups obtained in these mini-games are stored in a reserve until activated by the player from the map screen.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

In addition to special items from previous games like the "Super Mushroom" and the "Fire Flower", new power-ups are introduced that provide the player with new options. The "Super Leaf" and "Tanooki Suit" give Mario raccoon and tanooki appearances, allowing him to fly. The "Tanooki Suit" enables him to turn into stone to avoid enemies for a short period of time. Changing into a Tanooki statue while jumping results in Mario pounding the ground and killing whatever enemies are directly under him; this marks the first appearance of the "ground pound" move in a Mario game, a move later given to Yoshi in *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island* and that became part of Mario's standard move set in later Mario games<sup>[12]</sup> A new suit includes the "Frog Suit", which increases the character's underwater speed, agility, and jumping height on land. Another new suit, the "Hammer Suit", which gives Mario the appearance of the Hammer Bro. enemy and allows him to throw hammers at enemies and resist fire attacks (when crouching).

*Super Mario Bros. 3* includes a multiplayer option which allows two players to play the game by taking turns at navigating the overworld map and accessing stage levels. The first player controls Mario, while the other controls Luigi (a palette swap of Mario). Through this mode, players can access several mini-games, including a remake of the original *Mario Bros.* arcade game, in which one player has the opportunity to steal the cards of another, but may lose their turn if they lose the minigame.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Plot and characters

The plot of *Super Mario Bros. 3* is described in the instruction booklet. The Mushroom World, the setting of the game, is invaded by the Koopalings, Bowser's seven children. The Koopalings conquer each of the seven kingdoms by stealing its king's magical wand and using it to transform him into an animal. Princess Toadstool sends Mario and Luigi to travel to each kingdom, retrieve the stolen wand, and restore its king to normal.<sup>[14]</sup>

Mario and Luigi receive notes and special items from Princess Toadstool after rescuing each of the first six kings. When they rescue the seventh king, they instead receive a note from Bowser, boasting that he has kidnapped Toadstool and imprisoned her within the castle of his own realm, Dark Land.<sup>[15]</sup> The brothers travel through Dark Land, enter his castle, and defeat Bowser in a battle. The game ends with Toadstool being freed from the castle.<sup>[16]</sup>

*Super Mario Bros. 3* takes place as a stage play. The title screen features a stage curtain being drawn open, and during the game, objects hang from off-screen catwalks, are bolted to the background, or cast shadows on the skyline. When Mario finishes a level, he walks off the stage.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Development

Beginning development shortly after the release of *Super Mario Bros.: The Lost Levels*,<sup>[18]</sup> *Super Mario Bros. 3* was developed by Nintendo Entertainment Analysis and Development, a team that consisted of more than ten people. The game took more than two years to complete<sup>[5][19]</sup> at a budget of about \$800,000.<sup>[20]</sup> Developer Shigeru Miyamoto served as director. He worked closely with the designers and programmers during the conceptual and final stages, encouraging a free interchange of ideas. Miyamoto considered intriguing and original ideas to be key to creating a successful game.<sup>[19]</sup> Originally, the team intended for the game to be played from an isometric point of view, but the developers found that this made it too difficult to position jumps, so the game kept to the 2D side view used in previous games. Some elements of the game were left over from this concept, such as the checkered floor present in the game's opening cutscene.<sup>[18]</sup>

The game was designed to appeal to players of varying skill levels. To assist less skilled players, bonus coins and 1-ups are more abundant in earlier worlds, while later worlds present more complex challenges for experienced players. In the two-player mode, the players alternate turns to balance play time.<sup>[19]</sup> The development team introduced new power-ups and concepts that would give Mario the appearance of different creatures as a means of providing him with new abilities. An early idea changed Mario into a centaur, but was dropped in favor of a raccoon tail that allows limited flying ability.<sup>[5][19]</sup> Other costumes with different abilities were added to his repertoire, and levels were designed to take advantage of these abilities.<sup>[21]</sup> New enemies were included to add diversity to the game, along with variants of previous enemies, such as a Goombas, Hammer Bros., and Koopa Troopas.<sup>[5][21]</sup>

Some of the enemies designed for *Super Mario Bros. 3* were inspired by the team's personal experiences. For example, Miyamoto stated that the Chain Chomp enemy, a tethered ball and chain creature that lunges at the player when in close proximity, was based on a "bad [childhood] experience" he had with a dog.<sup>[19]</sup> Bowser's children, the Koopalings, were designed to be unique in appearance and personality; Miyamoto based the characters on seven of his programmers as a tribute to their work and efforts.<sup>[5][19]</sup> Nintendo of America named the Koopalings after well-known musicians: for example, the characters "Ludwig von Koopa" and "Roy Koopa" are named after Ludwig van Beethoven and Roy Orbison respectively.<sup>[22]</sup>

The character graphics were created with a special graphics machine ("Character Generator Computer Aided Design") that generated a collection of the graphical shapes used in the game. Shapes in the collection were assigned numbers that the game's code is used to access and combine to form complete images on the screen in real time.<sup>[19]</sup> The *Super Mario Bros. 3* cartridge uses Nintendo's custom MMC3 (memory management controller) ASIC to enhance the NES capabilities. The MMC3 chip allows for animated tiles, extra RAM for diagonal scrolling, and a scan line timer to split the screen. The game uses these functions to split the game screen into two portions, a playfield on the top and a status bar on the bottom. This allows the top portion to scroll as the character navigates the stage while the bottom portion remains static to display text and other information.<sup>[23]</sup>

Like its predecessors, the music in *Super Mario Bros. 3* was composed by Koji Kondo, who composed several new songs as well as returning melodies from *Super Mario Bros.* According to Kondo, who had composed the music in *Super Mario Bros.* based on what he believed fit the levels rather than focusing on composing a specific genre of music, the game was the most difficult game for him to compose.<sup>[24]</sup> Kondo experimented with several different genres of music, unsure of how to follow up the music from the first game after hearing from several people that it sounded a lot like latin or fusion music,<sup>[18]</sup> and came up with several different melodies throughout its development before settling on what ultimately made it into the game.<sup>[24]</sup> The development team chose not to feature music on the title screen, as it was felt to be unnecessary.<sup>[24]</sup>

During 1988, a shortage of ROM chips, along with Nintendo's preparation of *Super Mario Bros. 2*, prevented Nintendo from performing various North American game releases according to their original schedules. The delayed products included *Super Mario Bros. 3* and, according to *Nintendo Power*, *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link*.<sup>[25]</sup> The delay, however, presented Nintendo with an opportunity to promote the game in a feature film. In 1989, Tom Pollack of Universal Studios approached Nintendo of America's marketing department about a video game movie; inspired by Nintendo video game competitions, Pollack envisioned a video game version of Tommy for younger audiences. Nintendo licensed its products for inclusion in what would become the film *The Wizard*. During the movie's production, the filmmakers requested and were granted approval from Nintendo regarding the script and the portrayal of the company's games.<sup>[26]</sup> *Super Mario Bros. 3* was one of the products shown in the film and was used in a final scene involving a video game competition.<sup>[26][27]</sup> The film was released in December 1989, between the Japanese and English versions of the game.<sup>[28]</sup>

# Reception

*Super Mario Bros. 3* was lauded by the video game press. It was widely considered to be one of the best games released for the NES. *Computer and Video Games* editors Paul Rand, Tim Boone and Frank O'Connor awarded the game a 98/100, praising it for its gameplay, replayability, sound, and graphics. Boone commented that the game is nearly flawless in its utterly "stupendous incredibility and absolutely impossible to put down for anything less than a fire alarm – and even then you find yourself weighing down the odds." Rand called *Super Mario Bros. 3* the best video game ever, labeling it "the *Mona Lisa* of gaming" and stating that it is "astoundingly brilliant in every way, shape, and form." O'Connor stated that the game "makes*Sonic the Hedgehog* look like a wet Sunday morning and even gives the [Super] Famicom's [*Super Mario World*] a run for its money."<sup>[31]</sup>

The Japanese publication *Famitsu* gave it a 35 out of 40.<sup>[29]</sup> Julian Rignall of *Mean Machines* referred to *Super Mario Bros. 3* as the "finest video game" he had ever played, citing its addictiveness, depth, and challenge. A second *Mean Machines* reviewer, Matt Regan, anticipated the game be a bestseller in the United Kingdom, and echoed Rignall's praise, calling it a "truly brilliant game". Regan further stated that the game offered elements which tested the player's "brains and reflexes", and that though the graphics were simple, they were "incredibly varied".<sup>[10]</sup> In a preview of the game, *Nintendo Power* gave it high marks in graphics, audio, challenge, gameplay and enjoyability.<sup>[11]</sup>

*Super Mario Bros. 3* has received universal acclaim from modern critics who consider it one of the best games of all time. *Edge* considered *Super Mario Bros. 3* Nintendo's standout game of 1989, and commented that its success outshone the first *Super Mario Bros.*'s sales milestone; the first game sold 40 million copies, but was bundled with the NES.<sup>[34]</sup> They lauded the overworld map as an elegant alternative to a menu to select levels.<sup>[35]</sup> The items hidden in the game's levels, such as the warp whistles, were well-received: Rignall regarded them as part of the game's addictiveness, and Sheff stated that finding them provided a sense of satisfaction.<sup>[10][36]</sup> Both Screw Attack and GamesRadar ranked it the best NES game made. GamesRadar claimed that while *Super Mario Bros.* defined its genre, *Super Mario Bros. 3* perfected it.<sup>[7][37]</sup>

Criticism focused on particular aspects of the game. Rignall described the audio and visuals as being outdated in comparison to games on the Mega Drive and Super NES (the latter platform having already been launched in other regions by the time *Super Mario Bros. 3* was released in Europe).<sup>[10]</sup>

## Sales

*Super Mario Bros. 3* became a bestselling game.<sup>[21]</sup> Its inclusion in *The Wizard* served as a preview which generated a high level of anticipation in the United States prior to its release.<sup>[28][38]</sup> Levi Buchanan of IGN considered *Super Mario Bros. 3*'s appearance in the film as a show-stealing element, referring to the movie as a "90-minute commercial" for the game.<sup>[39]</sup> The game sold 250,000 copies in its first two days of release, according to a spokeswoman for Nintendo.<sup>[40]</sup> By 1993, the game had sold 4 and 7 million unbundled units in Japan and the United States respectively. In the United States alone, the game generated over US\$500 million in revenue for Nintendo. Author David Sheff commented that, in music industry terms, the game went platinum 11 times.<sup>[41]</sup> The game was later bundled with new NES systems. Including bundled units, the NES version of the game sold over 17 million copies.<sup>[42]</sup> *Game Informer* reported in their October 2009 issue that the Virtual Console version had sold one million copies.<sup>[43]</sup> As of 2011, *Super Mario Bros. 3* remains the highest-grossing non-bundled home video game to date, having grossed \$1.7 billion, adjusted for inflation.<sup>[44]</sup>

# Legacy

Reception	
Aggregate score	
Aggregator	Score
GameRankings	97.50% (6 reviews) <sup>[30]</sup>
Review scores	
Publication	Score
CVG	NES: 98/100 <sup>[31]</sup>
Famitsu	35/40 <sup>[29]</sup>
GameSpot	Wii: 9/10 <sup>[32]</sup>
IGN	Wii: 9.5/10 <sup>[33]</sup>
Mean Machines	NES: 98% <sup>[10]</sup>

*Super Mario Bros. 3* introduced several elements carried over to subsequent *Mario* games.<sup>[45]</sup> A similar overworld map is used in *Super Mario World* and *New Super Mario Bros.*, and Mario's ability to fly has been a feature in games such as *Super Mario World*, *Super Mario 64* and *Super Mario Galaxy*.<sup>[5][46][47]</sup> The game's "Super Leaf" item has returned in more recent *Mario* games for the *Nintendo 3DS*, like *Super Mario 3D Land*, *Mario Kart 7* and *New Super Mario Bros. 2*. Bowser's red hair was first popularized in the game and has since become a part of his standard appearance.<sup>[5]</sup>

Through a collaboration between *NBC* and Nintendo of America, an animated television series, *The Adventures of Super Mario Bros. 3*, was created in 1990 by *DIC Entertainment*. The show aired weekly and featured numerous characters, enemies, and settings from the video game; the original seven Koopalings are given different names based on their given personalities and are also given a new age order.<sup>[48]</sup> Other Nintendo products have included various elements of the game as well. Music from *Super Mario Bros. 3* appears as a track on *Nintendo Sound Selection Koopa*, a collection of songs from Nintendo games.<sup>[49]</sup> The game's stages and graphics comprise a background theme in the 2006 *Nintendo DS* game *Tetris DS*.<sup>[50]</sup> The Koopalings are also world bosses in *Super Mario World*, *Mario is Missing!*, *Yoshi's Safari*, *Hotel Mario* and all *New Super Mario Bros.* games except *New Super Mario Bros.*<sup>[51][52]</sup> Boom Boom, another boss from this game, additionally reappears in *Super Mario 3D Land* and *Super Mario 3D World*, alongside a boomerang-wielding female counterpart named Pom Pom.<sup>[53]</sup> *Super Mario Bros. 3* is one of the four games represented in *Super Mario Maker*.



*Super Mario Bros. 3* is credited for popularizing the use of overworld maps in the *Mario* series.

*Super Mario Bros. 3* has appeared on numerous top video game lists. The game debuted on *Nintendo Power*'s Top 30 best games ever list at number 20 in September 1989.<sup>[6]</sup> It entered the list's top 10 a few months later and reached number one in May 1990.<sup>[54][55]</sup> *Super Mario Bros. 3* remained within the top 20 for more than five years.<sup>[56]</sup> More than a decade later, the magazine ranked the game number six on their list of 200 Greatest Nintendo Games.<sup>[57]</sup> In August 2008, *Nintendo Power* listed *Super Mario Bros. 3* as the second best NES video game, praising it for making the series more complex and introducing new abilities that have since become signature abilities in the series.<sup>[58]</sup> The game placed 11th, behind *Super Mario Bros.*, in *Official Nintendo Magazine*'s "100 greatest Nintendo games of all time".<sup>[45]</sup> In 2007, *ScrewAttack* called *Super Mario Bros. 3* the best *Mario* game in the series as well as the best game on the NES, citing the graphics, power-ups, secrets, and popularity, summing it up as "just incredible" and stating, "If you haven't experienced this greatness, we pity you".<sup>[7][59]</sup> In a poll conducted by *Dengeki*, the game tied with *Super Mario World* as the number three video game their readers first played.<sup>[60]</sup>

The game has been ranked on several of IGN's lists of "top games". In 2005, they rated it 23rd among their Top 100 Games, and praised the precise and intuitive controls.<sup>[61]</sup> IGN editors from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia ranked *Super Mario Bros. 3* number 39 in their 2007 Top 100 Games, citing Miyamoto's "ingenious" designs. They further commented that the game improved on the "already-brilliant concepts" of the previous games with new power-ups and enemies.<sup>[5]</sup> Users and readers of the website placed the game high on similar lists: 32nd in 2005 and 21st in 2006.<sup>[62][63]</sup> In 2007, the game was included in the "game canon", a list of the ten most important video games selected for preservation by the *Library of Congress*.<sup>[64]</sup> In 2009, *Game Informer* put *Super Mario Bros. 3* 9th on their list of "The Top 200 Games of All Time", saying that it is "a game with incredible lasting power that we won't soon forget".<sup>[43]</sup> This is down one place from *Game Informer*'s previous ranking in 2001.<sup>[65]</sup> *Edge* ranked the game #20 on its list of "The 100 Best Games To Play Today", calling it "the one 8-bit game that still shines today, no caveats required".<sup>[66]</sup> *UGO* listed *Super Mario Bros. 3* on their list of the "Top 50 Games That Belong On the 3DS", calling it "Arguably the greatest Mario game ever made".<sup>[67]</sup> *GameSpot* placed the game on their list of the greatest games of all time.<sup>[68]</sup> *USgamer* ranked the game as the third best *Mario* platformer ever.<sup>[69]</sup> *Super Mario Bros. 3* ranked 34th on *Warp Zoned*'s "Scientifically Proven Best Video Games of All Time" list, a statistical meta-analysis of 44 "top games" lists published between 1995 and 2016.<sup>[70]</sup>

In the early 1990s, game developers *John Carmack* and *Tom Hall* developed an *adaptive tile refresh* technology to perform smooth, side-scrolling graphics on *EGA* cards for *IBM clone* personal computers. They used it to develop a clone of *Super Mario Bros. 3* and presented it to Nintendo, who rejected it to retain exclusivity for their games on Nintendo consoles. Carmack and Hall went on to

found Id Software and develop Commander Keen, a series of platform games inspired by Super Mario Bros. 3.<sup>[71][72][73][74][75]</sup>

## Remakes

The game has been ported or remade on several other Nintendo consoles. It was included in the 1993 Super NES game Super Mario All-Stars, a compilation of remakes of NES Super Mario games featuring updated graphics and sound,<sup>[76]</sup> which was also later released on the Wii in 2010.<sup>[77]</sup> A Game Boy Advance version, Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3, was released in 2003. This version features support for the Nintendo e-Reader peripheral, which allows the player to access additional levels stored on e-Reader cards, in addition to updated graphics, powerups, and sound.<sup>[78]</sup>

Super Mario Bros. 3 was rereleased as a downloadable Virtual Console game in 2007 for the Wii and in 2014 for both the Nintendo 3DS and Wii U consoles. These versions support multiple console-specific controllers, such as the Wii Remote or the Wii U GamePad, and allow players to save progress with the use of save states.<sup>[79][80]</sup> The game was included as one of thirty pre-installed NES games included with the NES Classic Edition plug and play console.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Notes

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## External links

- Super Mario Bros. 3* (Virtual Console version) at *Nintendo's* website
- Super Mario Bros. 3* at *NinDB*
- Super Mario Bros. 3* at *MobyGames*

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